

REMARKS

In the Office Action, restriction was required between the following groups of claims:

Group I – claims 1-19, drawn to a closure assembly or a container and a closure assembly;

Group II – claims 20-26, drawn to a method of using a closure assembly;

Group III – claims 32-44, drawn to a method of making a closure assembly.

As indicated, Applicant elects Group I, claims 1-19 for further prosecution in this application. Applicant hereby traverses the three-way restriction issued by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of Group III, claims 32-44, should remain in this application with the elected claims of Group I. Applicant notes that the Examiner appears to have overlooked claims 27-31 in the above groupings, and it appears that claims 27-31 belong in Group II as dependent claims from independent claim 20.


Applicant respectfully submits that a thorough and complete search of the subject matter set forth in claims 1-19 will likely encompass the subject matter claimed in 32-44. The apparatus claimed in claims 1-19 is generally made by the process set forth in claims 32-44. Thus, any relevant references identified by the Examiner in connection with the subject matter of claims 1-19 will also likely be relevant to the subject matter (i.e., method) set forth in claims 32-44. The synergy between these two groups of claims should be reason enough to keep the claims of Group I and the claims of Group III together in this application. This will result in the most efficient prosecution for the Examiner and the Applicant, and minimize divisional filing fees for the Applicant, a sole inventor.

Additionally, Applicant notes that many of the claims depending from independent claims 1 and 10 and the dependent claims from independent 32 claim similar subject matter related to the polymer coating applied to the split ring member. The substantial number of substantially duplicate dependent claims depending from the apparatus in independent claims 1 and 10 and method independent claim 32 is further reason to maintain the claims of Group I and Group III together in this application.

For all the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests examination of the claims of Group I, claims 1-19, and the claims of Group III, claims 32-44, in this application. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application on the non-elected claims of Group II, claims 20-31 and the non-elected claims of Group III, claims 32-44 should the Examiner maintain the restriction requirement in the next Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,

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